

# A GARDEN PARTY WITH GLOBAL STYLE

Parties at textile designer **John Robshaw's** Connecticut home feel like a mini vacation thanks to his worldly aesthetic and laid-back approach.



**T**wo hours from his showroom in New York City, John Robshaw's 1840s farmhouse in Sharon, CT, feels a world away. Overflowing with his signature Indian block print fabrics, the house is an exotic backdrop to weekend parties he and his wife, Rachel, throw for friends. To maximize time for socializing, they've designed a preparty strategy. "It's about having everything set up in advance," says John, who opts for mismatched decor, strategically placed games, and a variety of drinks and snacks for guests to enjoy until dinner is served.

◀ **OUTDOOR OASIS**  
An old pavilion packed with comfort gives guests a spot for quiet conversation. Floor pillows create extra seating.

PRODUCED BY: MONIKA EYERS; STYLING: ERIN SWIFT

AN OLD  
METAL WATERING  
JUG MAKES  
AN EXTRA-LARGE  
VASE FOR BIG  
HYDRANGEAS.



## KEEP IT FLOWING

1

### INVITE WANDERING

John sets up distinct gathering areas in the garden so guests mingle away from the kitchen.

2

### CULTIVATE CONVERSATION

Encouraging people to kick back is as simple as pulling furniture into a group and putting out snacks and games.

3

### MAKE THE BAR A DESTINATION

A vibrant bar scene doesn't need to involve a vine-covered arbor. Set up a folding table in any nook, cover it with printed fabric, and add tall flowers or branches in a big copper bucket. "Going big with the flowers gives a bar an exotic feel," John says. "It's instant atmosphere."





John collaborated with friend and neighbor Dana Brandwein of DBO Home on the ceramic plates. Her husband, sculptor and woodworker Daniel Oates, made the dining table.

#### CREATIVE PURSUITS

## FORGET FUSSY RULES

#### FABRIC WILL DO

Entertaining outdoors is a chance to shake off formality. John uses an Indian sari as an oversize, flowy

runner, letting it puddle on the ground. "You could also buy a few yards of fabric and drape it over your table," he says.

#### PILE ON PATTERN

Mix-and-match patterned cushions brighten vintage metal chairs. Sticking

to a blue-and-white palette keeps the look cohesive.

#### GO AHEAD, CLASH

"You're outside, and it's bright. You're competing with intense colors, so I like to go intense on the table too," says John, who juxtaposes hot and cool colors: pink and coral against blue and

aqua in the place settings, vases, and flowers.

#### WEAVE IN CHARM

Down the center of the table, flowers from the garden, bowls of fruit, and farm-stand berries still in their paper baskets emphasize the informal feel.



#### PARTY PLAYLIST

Hover your smartphone camera over this code for John's go-to mix of Paul Simon, Etta James, The Kinks, and more.

shop the look

# PLAY WITH PATTERN

Embrace John's love of color and exotic motifs with tableware in outdoor-friendly materials, such as melamine plates, paper napkins, and vintage-inspired acrylic drinkware.



1



2



3



4



▲ John uses metals—like brass trays and copper Indian bowls—as a neutral. “They’re a kind of grounding color,” he says.



6

“It’s fun in a casual setting to mix things around informally and have something out of the ordinary.”

JOHN ROBshaw

8



▲ Printed plates from DBO Home stand out against contrasting chargers. “I love how chargers pop a plate off the table to add another layer,” he says.



5



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- 1 PLAYING CARDS** Le Jardin De Mysore, \$17 (set of two); [casparionline.com](http://casparionline.com) **2 PAPER NAPKINS** Granada Luncheon, \$14 (set of 20); [serenaandlily.com](http://serenaandlily.com) **3 ACRYLIC WINE GLASS** \$11; [ricebyrice.us](http://ricebyrice.us) **4 TWO TIERED SERVER** Golden Scalloped, \$35; [pier1.com](http://pier1.com) **5 GOLD FLATWARE SET** gold-plated stainless steel, \$40 (five-piece place setting); [westelm.com](http://westelm.com) **6 LUNCH PLATES** Dahlia Pink Melamine, \$60 (set of six); [pomegranateinc.com](http://pomegranateinc.com) **7 TABLECLOTH** Adima Moss hand-printed cotton, from \$90; [johnrobshaw.com](http://johnrobshaw.com) **8 MELAMINE PLATTER** Le Cadeaux Jardin in Moroccan Blue, \$38; [horchow.com](http://horchow.com) ■